

State Vocational Federation of Teachers

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Thank you for your time. I am here to support Bill 5837.

Most of the Connecticut Technical High Schools currently enjoy a very positive relationship with the Community Colleges and the Community Technical Colleges in their areas. One of our most successful partnerships exists among Harvard Ellis Tech in Danielson and Quinebaug Community College in Danielson, and Three Rivers Community Technical College in Norwich. This model, which could and should be duplicated in a relationship between J.M. Wright Tech in Stamford and Norwalk Community College, allows our high schools students to earn up to 15 college credits during their senior year and to take college level courses at no cost.

There are two different articulated agreements at work here:

1. The Partnership Program with the community colleges allows students to enroll – at no cost – in evening courses that are undersubscribed. The college notifies the counselor at the technical high school that there are certain courses which have not been filled by the college students. Interested tech high school students then have the opportunity to take the course in the evening and earn college credit while still in high school. These courses, many of which are science courses, are offered free of charge, but the student must take the college placement test before taking the course and must, of course be in good standing. (B-average is preferred).
 - This is working very well; it is a very positive program which should be expanded.
2. The College Career Pathway Program allows the juniors and seniors in the technical high schools to earn up to 15 college credits for

course and technology work they undertake in high school. For example, because Three Rivers Community Technical College offers degrees in Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, and Architectural Drafting, our students in Electrical, Electronics, Manufacturing Technology and Drafting can earn 3 college credits if parts of our curriculum are aligned with theirs. These students also take more challenging Physics, Algebra II, or Pre-Calculus, and English courses during their junior and senior year at the technical high school. Credits earned for successfully completing these courses will be applied toward graduation requirements and will earn them college credit at the community technical college.

- a. Students who are enrolled in technologies not taught at the community-technical college may also participate by taking computer education courses in addition to their academic and trade courses. These students would earn credit towards a degree in Business Office Technology.

Plans are currently underway to expand the program at Quinnebaug to include a program in Construction Technology which will be advantageous for our technical high school students currently in the construction trades – carpentry and plumbing, and HVAC.

These partnerships are most beneficial and worth expanding for a number of reasons:

- It is a motivator for students to not only stay in school, but to improve performance to compete for a slot in the College Career Pathway Program. If a student does not have a C or better average he/she is put on a wait list. This allows the student to improve and still leaves the door open.
- They provide a very affordable college alternative.

- Often a high school graduate may be unsure of his or her abilities, thinking that they are not “college material”. These programs provide an opportunity to try a college course, meet with success, and realize the college is a viable option for them.
- Often a high school graduate may not be mature enough for dorm life and the distractions that come along with living away from home. The community-technical college model allows our students to not only get a head-start towards a degree, but to also live at home in a structured environment and keep their part-time jobs. It’s a win-win!

The position of the State Vocational Federation of Teachers is one of support for this bill. These programs should be expanded across the state and this pathway from high school to community-technical college to higher education is a very beneficial thing for the State of Connecticut. It enables us to keep the best and the brightest here in Connecticut and to gear up to provide training and education to meet the ever-increasing demands for the skills, knowledge, and adaptability needed in a global economy. Investing in the education of our youth is a priceless infrastructure venture that brings the guarantee of a long-term return.

Rick Tanasi, President
State Vocational Federation of Teachers

